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THE BOOK OF THE MONTH

TWO SUPERMEN¹

BY LAWRENCE GILMAN

ELIZABETH FOERSTER-NIETZSCHE, in her preface to the English version of her brother's correspondence with Wagner, quotes Richard Strauss as saying that he regarded the period in which the friendship between Wagner and Nietzsche was at its zenith as "one of the most impressive and significant cultural moments of the nineteenth century". Strauss's saying is not extravagant. The period in question comprised the three years that lay between 1869 and 1872. Wagner had completed all his works save *Parsifal*, and was already a world figure; the youthful Nietzsche was rattling with his young lion's paw the drybones of classical philology as professor at the University of Basle, and had produced his brilliant and significant *Birth of Tragedy*. The association of the two supermen resulted in a dazzling display of intellectual and temperamental fireworks, and in a tragi-comedy immensely engrossing to the student of the mundane spectacle.

Wagner and Nietzsche met for the first time in the Autumn of 1868, and in the following summer Nietzsche visited the composer of *Tristan* at the villa in Tribschen, on Lake Lucerne, where Wagner was living with the wife of Hans von Bülow: Cosima, the accomplished daughter of Franz Liszt and the Countess d'Agoult. For so stern a moralist as Nietzsche the situation must have been somewhat trying. Wagner told his friend Malvida von Meysenburg that Nietzsche had "suffered unspeakably" over the irregular relations of Wagner's household—a statement corroborated by Nietzsche's sister, who explains to us that Nietzsche was able to "overcome his scruples" against

¹*The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*: Edited by Elizabeth Foerster-Nietzsche. Translated by Caroline V. Kerr. Boni and Liveright, New York.

associating with the gifted paramours at Tribschen on the ground that "extraordinary persons are at liberty to adjust their personal relations according to their own standards", and that "this was particularly true of artists". Wagner, according to Nietzsche's view, "proved that a genius need not fear to take an inimically hostile attitude towards existing social forms and laws, if by so doing he is endeavoring to disclose the still higher truth and law dwelling in him." This "still higher truth and law" was, to be sure, somewhat oddly exemplified by Wagner: for he was not too preoccupied by his devotion to Cosima to lack time for meditating a helpful marriage with a rich widow shortly before he and Bülow's wife fell into each other's arms at Wagner's pretty villa on Lake Starnberg. Less than a year later, a daughter was born as a result of this rapprochement, and they named her "Isolde", which was a happy thought: for just two months afterward, the guileless and devoted Bülow, who thought the child was his, conducted at Munich the première of a certain opera in which another Isolde, also a creation of Wagner's, figures conspicuously. You wonder if Wagner and Cosima laughed over the odd coincidence as they listened to Bülow's memorable conducting that night in the Munich opera-house.

It was certainly an irrubrical situation that was presented to the view of Nietzsche by that household at Tribschen when he first entered it in 1869. Perhaps he was not always so tactful as he might have been. His sister tells us that Nietzsche's "chastity" "seemed to irritate Wagner", and that the untamed reprobate was occasionally goaded into an outburst of rude frankness that appears to have distressed the prim young philologist from Basle.

Bülow was far more considerate of everybody's feelings. There is no more amazing passage in this extraordinary chronicle than that which describes Bülow's efforts to put Nietzsche at his ease concerning the complicated relationships of the Wagner household. Consider the circumstances: According to the implications in Wagner's own story of his life, he was emotionally aware of Cosima von Bülow as early as 1858,² although he was

² See *Mein Leben*, pp. 858-9.

then at the climax (a humiliating one for him) of his incandescent affair with his Zürich Isolde, Mathilde Wesendonck. Cosima had married Hans von Bülow the year before. Wagner was still married to his burdensome Minna. Cosima was not yet 21; Wagner was 45. Four years later—in the summer of 1862—Wagner was convinced of Cosima's love. "The belief that she was mine took hold of me with certainty," he tells us (the deluded Bülow thought that she was *his*). The following year—November, 1863—"a passionate longing for an avowal of the truth overpowered us," he says, "and brought us to a confession, which needed no words, of the infinite unhappiness that weighed upon us." (It was in the summer of this year that Wagner wrote the ineffable love-letter to his accommodating serving-maid, his "dear little Marie", his "best sweetheart", whom he exhorted to have in readiness for his home-coming to Penzing the coupé at the station, the warm and perfumed study, the "rose-colored pants", the barber, the hairdresser, and the loving Marie herself.³ In 1864, the unsuspecting Bülow sent his wife and child to visit Wagner at his Starnberg villa. In the Spring of the following year (April 10, 1865) Cosima von Bülow bore Wagner a daughter. Wagner's wife, Minna, died in January, 1866, and two months later, Cosima, during her husband's absence on a concert tour, abode with Wagner at Geneva for a while. Wagner's unpopularity at Munich had forced King Ludwig, much against his wishes, to ask the troublesome Titan to go elsewhere; and Wagner, with an annuity of almost \$4,000 from his royal friend, settled permanently at Tribschen, where Cosima, with her children of assorted parentage, joined him in May, 1866. In the following February she bore him another daughter (Eva). Meanwhile Bülow accidentally learned the truth. He went to Tribschen, and was told that the Wagner-Cosima entente was permanent, remained several months to fool the gossips, gave up his wife and family to his friend, and departed. Merely for the looks of the thing, Cosima made a subsequent visit to her husband at Munich, where the King had given Hans a job as Court Kapellmeister; but the situation became wholly impossible, and

³Julius Kapp: *Richard Wagner und die Frauen*.

in June, 1869, Wagner and Cosima retreated to Tribschen, whilst Bülow went his way alone. He was a noble soul, and later he got together a fund of \$10,000 for Wagner's Bayreuth project—"though his presence at the Festival," as Ernest Newman drily observes, "was of course impossible." It was also in June, 1869, that another child was born to Wagner and Cosima. Wagner was not unappreciative. "She [Cosima] has defied every disapprobation and taken upon herself every condemnation," he wrote to a friend a year later. "She has borne me a wonderfully beautiful and vigorous boy, whom I could boldly call 'Siegfried'; he is now growing, together with my work, and gives me a new, long life, which at last has attained a meaning. Thus we get along without the world, from which we have retired entirely." Cosima was released from Bülow, on his suit, in July, 1870; and on August 25 she married Wagner.

And now consider what miracles of accommodation it is possible for the human spirit to achieve: Bülow, enthusiastic over Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, called on the young professor to beg him to accept the dedication of his translation of Leopardi. Nietzsche, his sister tells us, was "placed in a most embarrassing position by this visit, occurring, as it did, just at the time when the friendship between Wagner and Nietzsche was at its height—about 1872. Bülow perceived this at once, and, at the close of their conversation in regard to the *Birth of Tragedy*, sought to dispel my brother's embarrassment by voluntarily alluding to the subject of his relations with Wagner and Cosima. He drew the following picture: Cosima was *Ariadne*, he himself was *Theseus*, and Wagner was *Dionysius*; but like all analogies, this one also had a weak spot: as, in this case, *Theseus* had not deserted *Ariadne*, but just the reverse. Bülow, evidently, wished to convey the idea that he had been superseded by a higher being, by a god. My brother was delighted beyond measure to hear Bülow thus investing his own experience with such an impersonal and mythical character." Yes: that must have made the formidable Wagner-Cosima pill quite a simple and pleasant thing for the squeamish Nietzsche to swallow. Amiability like Bülow's is indeed divine.

Such was the household to which Nietzsche was introduced in

the summer of 1869. As it turned out, the "omen" which he perceived in the circumstance that his first visit to Tribschen coincided with the birth of Wagner's son was anything but "auspicious"; for seven years later, this famous friendship between the greatest of tone-poets and the biographer of Zarathustra was at an end, and Nietzsche was assailing Wagner with every weapon that his bitterness could supply. But while it lasted, their association was of the greatest interest and significance. Nietzsche himself, shortly before his mental collapse in 1888, described his intercourse with Wagner as "that which, among the vivifying influences of my life, refreshed me most profoundly and most genuinely. All the rest of my human relationships I treat quite lightly, but at no price would I be willing to blot from my life the Tribschen days: those days of mutual confidence, of sublime flashes . . . the deep moments."

Wagner at the beginning of this memorable friendship was fifty-six years old. He had composed, in addition to *Rienzi*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*, most of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*Rheingold*, *Walküre*, and *Siegfried*), besides *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger*—that is to say, he had produced five transcendent masterpieces, had revolutionized the art of music, had turned the conventions of the opera-house inside out, and had set the intellectual populations of Europe and America clawing at each other's eyes over his theories and innovations. He was, of course, immensely famous. The later and characteristic Wagner, the Wagner of *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger*, was being ridiculed by almost the entire press of Europe—"merely," as Mr. W. J. Henderson has remarked, "because Wagner had dared to say that an opera was a poetic drama, and should be so written, so performed, and so received by the public." But a King had befriended him, and he was now, for almost the first time in his life, enjoying material comfort and comparative ease of mind; he was deeply happy with Cosima; and he was naïvely convinced that he was the greatest composer of dramatic music that ever lived—which happened to be quite true.

In the autumn of 1868 Nietzsche met the great little man for the first time at Leipsic. Wagner had come to town to visit

relatives, but was preserving a strict incognito. "He inquired very minutely," wrote Nietzsche, "how I came to be so familiar with his works, and inveighed roundly against the production of his operas, with the exception of the famous Munich performances. He ridiculed the conductors, who good-humoredly call out to their men: 'Now, gentlemen, just a trifle more passionate!—*Meine Gutsen, noch ein bisschen leidenschaft erlicher!*'—Wagner is fond of using the Saxon dialect. . . . Before and after dinner, Wagner played all the important episodes from *Die Meistersinger*, imitating the different voices. He is an astoundingly vivacious and high-spirited man, speaks very rapidly, is extremely witty, and is very animated when in the company of intimate friends."

In the following Spring, Nietzsche was called to the University of Basle as professor of classical philology, and one day he set out along the lake shore road to call on Wagner at the Villa Tribschen. Just outside the garden hedge he paused, listening (his sister writes) "to an excruciating discord repeated again and again. Later he learned that this was from the third act of *Siegfried*, at the point where the hero exclaims: *Werwundet hat mich, der mich erweckt.*" This somewhat remarkable statement is, one suspects, an elaboration of Frau Foerster-Nietzsche's, for it is both stupid and erroneous. The "excruciating discord" is one that Bach, Beethoven, and a dozen other forerunners of Wagner used repeatedly; and if Frau Foerster-Nietzsche had taken the trouble to glance at the text of *Siegfried* she would have seen that the words in question are not spoken by "the hero", but by Brünnhilde. And, while we are about it, we may as well draw attention to a few other flagrant errors in this edition of the Nietzsche-Wagner correspondence (whether due to the English translator, to Nietzsche himself, or to his sister, we know not). As nobody takes seriously any stupidity or absurdity or perversion of fact that may be uttered about music, we suppose these particular instances will go uncorrected to the end of time. But here they are:

Nietzsche in his characterization of the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven describes the third movement as "the second", and the second movement as "the third". (page 118-19.)

The scene between Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens does not occur, as Nietzsche wrote, in "the second act" of *Götterdämmerung*, but in the third. (page 268.)

And to speak of the Prologue of *Götterdämmerung* (which is really an act in itself, including the Norn scene and the scene of the parting of Brünnhilde and Siegfried) as the "Overture to *Götterdämmerung*" is ignorant and misleading. (page 42.)

We left Nietzsche hesitating outside the garden hedge at Tribschen. He entered, and declined an invitation to stay for dinner, but he saw much of the household from thenceforward. He was enraptured with his new friend.

Wagner [he wrote in June, 1869] is really everything that one could expect; he has an extravagantly rich and noble nature, energetic character, fascinating personality, and strong will power. . . . The world has not the faintest conception of his greatness as a man and of his exceptional nature.

Wagner and Cosima, for their part, became exceedingly fond of Nietzsche. "We regard you as one of the family," we find Cosima writing him in the following Autumn, "and this is saying a good deal, in view of the material and moral seclusion of our little court." He became their devoted friend, apostle, propagandist, commissioner, messenger-boy, and was entrusted with the buying of Christmas presents in Basle for the family at Tribschen—toys, a doll's theatre, Dürer engravings, books, antiques.

Wagner was then deep in the music of *Götterdämmerung*, though he complained that he was "not good for much" because of "catarrhal and abdominal pains".

The King has let himself be heard from in his customary erratic manner [he wrote on Jan. 14, 1870]. It is possible that *Rheingold* and *Walküre*⁴—will be given in Munich this year, though it is scarcely *probable* that this will be done in accordance with my wishes.

But Cosima was there to console him, and they read Plato and Euripides together, and Wagner amused himself by choosing a title-vignette for his Autobiography, which he insisted must be his family crest.

⁴ *Rheingold* had been produced at Munich, contrary to Wagner's wish, September 22, 1869, for the first time anywhere; *Die Walküre* was produced there June 26, 1870. Both performances were inadequate, and Wagner was much upset by them.

It is somewhat amusing to find Frau Foerster-Nietzsche recording that Nietzsche was "offended" by Wagner's atheism. Nietzsche the anti-Christ as Pecksniff! But there was a cattish strain in Nietzsche, and in later years his bright malice became feminine in the ignobler sense. In the early seventies, however, his loyalty and devotion were not yet impaired. Wagner was still "the beloved master", Nietzsche still the "dear friend" whose books Wagner could not praise enough.

Nietzsche threw himself without reserve into the service of Wagner and his projects. "I have formed an alliance with Wagner," he told Rohde. He devoted himself with the utmost unselfishness and ardor to conducting propaganda for the Wagnerian cause. His zeal and self-forgetfulness were prodigious. He acted as amanuensis, as agent, as pamphleteer, as partisan, as prophet, as forerunner, as apostle: he was Wagner's Joe Tumulty, his Ray Stannard Baker, his John the Baptist.

In the Spring of 1872, just before his fifty-ninth birthday, Wagner moved his household from Tribschen to Bayreuth. But Nietzsche still writes to him as "Most Revered Master", and Wagner replies to his "Dear, Good Friend".

Nietzsche's allegiance began to waver in 1874. He sent Wagner his second *Thoughts Out of Season*, on *The Use or Abuse of History*. The Wagners were not interested. Nietzsche, remarks his sister, "had taken the liberty of writing a book which had nothing to do with Bayreuth"; and Nietzsche himself declared that it had become plain to him that his only value lay in his being a Wagner commentator: "I am to be nothing more." But "cordial letters received from his friends in Bayreuth during the summer of 1875," says his sister, "again revived my brother's old love and admiration for Wagner, and in 1876 he published his *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, which he described as a 'sort of Bayreuth Festival sermon'". The cause, says Mr. Huneker, "had found its philosophical exponent." There was great rejoicing in the Wagnerian stronghold. "Your book is simply tremendous!" wrote the delighted Richard. "Where did you learn so much about me? Come to us soon and accustom yourself to the impressions by attending the rehearsals".

Nietzsche set out for the Festival in high spirits, "hoping to

fall under the old spell in listening to Wagner's music," as his sister observes. He went with high hopes and anticipations, expecting to find what his sister calls "only kindred spirits" assembled at Bayreuth, "all looking forward to the Festival as something by which their entire life was to be consecrated. . . . A unique audience, the elect of Europe, gathered together to await the consummation of an idea—a concourse of rare souls." He found, of course, something quite different. Anyone able to pay the sum of 900 marks for the twelve performances was free to go; and the result, naturally, was that Bayreuth "became the rendezvous of the customary 'first-night' audiences from the larger centres, for the most part people who came to be seen and to boast of having been present." Nietzsche, as Mr. Huneker remarks, loathed the mob, the promiscuous herd; and "the motley crowd that was attracted to Bayreuth filled the exclusive philosopher with horror". It seemed, says his sister, "as if the entire leisure rabble of Europe had met here, and everyone was free to go in and out of Wagner's own house as if the entire Bayreuth undertaking was some new and fascinating sort of sport. . . . This class of rich idlers had found a new pretext for idling,—this time, 'grand opera' with obstacles"; and Frau Foerster-Nietzsche ventures the profound observation that Wagner's music, "by reason of its concealed sexuality, was found to form a new bond for a social class in which everyone was bent upon following his or her own *plaisirs*." The "concealed sexuality" of the music of *Götterdämmerung*!

All this—and "the tiresome company of 'Patrons', both men and women, very much bored and unmusical to the point of saturation"—convinced Nietzsche of "the illusory character of Wagner's ideals". In other words, Wagner's ideals were worthless because his gigantic and widely advertised undertaking drew empty-headed idlers and curiosity-seekers. Wagner was to be disowned because of the Wagnerites and the gaping crowds. Nietzsche might as well have repudiated the ocean because it yields sharks and tempts some people to suicide, or Greek poetry because of the morals of Sappho. As Havelock Ellis has pointed out, Nietzsche was something of a prig. But Frau Foerster-Nietzsche, let it be noted, is kind enough to assure posterity

that there were "refined, highly intelligent persons present at Bayreuth".

And now Nietzsche, on thinking it over, discovers that his championship of Wagner had represented "a pause, a falling-back". He discovers, in particular, that Wagner's music can no longer hold his esteem; and here are some of the remarkable conclusions he arrives at concerning it: "This music is addressed to inartistic persons." . . . "This music does not *sing*." [Nietzsche would no doubt refer us, for proof of the latter assertion, to *Die Meistersinger*, Act II of *Tristan*, or Act I of *Walküre*.]

The music of the second act of *Götterdämmerung* is "inarticulate"; and he asks: "Has the drama gained anything from this adjunct [the music]?"

"The orchestra—what far-fetched, artificial, and depraved tones were to be heard there! What a travesty upon nature!"

On the whole, "The music is not of much value."

Reading these pathetic imbecilities, you cannot help wondering what on earth Nietzsche ever got out of the music of *Tristan*,—whether, indeed, he ever felt its specifically musical quality? It is easy to be moved by the emotional incandescence of the work without getting close to the music *quâ* music. His sister thinks that if Wagner had only made to Nietzsche at this time a confession of sin and a promise of repentance, the breach might have been closed. She wishes Wagner had said: "Oh friend, the entire Festival is nothing but a farce! . . . My music also should have been quite different; I now see this, and I will return to melody and simplicity". Alas, Wagner failed to promise any such good behavior. Nietzsche departed for Italy, and at Sorrento he ran into his former friend, who had gone there from Bayreuth, and heard from his lips the plan of the projected *Parsifal*. This was too much for Nietzsche—Wagner the "atheist" meditating a drama of Christian mysticism, and daring to "speak of his religious feelings and experiences in a tone of the deepest repentance. . . . This make-believe on Wagner's part and this pretense of having become a naïve, pious Christian was more than my brother could stand." There may be more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over the ninety and nine which need no repentance; but there was no joy in Nietz-

sche's heart over this converted reprobate from Bayreuth. In fact, he believed that Wagner was faking, "prompted by a desire to stand well with the Christian rulers of Germany and thus further the material success of the Bayreuth undertaking." Nietzsche seems not to have been aware that the inception of *Parsifal* dates from 1848, when Wagner was a young man in his thirties and had no reverence for "Germany's Christian rulers"—that is to say, more than a quarter of a century before Wagner discussed the work with Nietzsche at Sorrento in 1876. The first actual sketch of the drama dates from 1857, and the "Good Friday" music belongs to the same year. The drama was worked out in detail in 1864, although the poem was not finished until 1877 and the music not until 1882. But Nietzsche was through with Wagner, no matter what the truth of history may have been. "I had recognized the fact that my faith in Wagner was based upon an error," he told his sister afterward. "We were too essentially different in our innermost natures, and this was bound to cause a separation sooner or later."

Many have speculated as to the reason for the famous quarrel. Mr. H. L. Mencken, in his admirably trenchant preface to this volume, thinks the cause was simple and unescapable:

Nietzsche grew so vastly during the years that the two men were together that it was quite impossible for him to go on as a mere satellite, even of a Wagner. It is to the credit of Wagner's discernment that he saw almost instantly the great ability of the younger man; it is to the shame thereof that his valuation of it stopped far short of the reality. What he beheld before him was a young professor of extraordinary parts, eagerly responsive to his revolutionary (and often anything but transparent) ideas, full of a chivalric but ferocious bellicosity, and extremely effective as a propagandist. What he actually *had* in front of him was a European figure of the first calibre—perhaps the most salient and original personality seen in the groves of learning since Goethe. It is always hard for an old man to fathom the true importance of a young one. [As for Nietzsche], he could see only the magician in Wagner, and quite forgot the man. But it was not long before that man began to intrude in a very disconcerting way; and so, bit by bit, Nietzsche became restive, and in the end he rose in open revolt. . . . Among equals there can be no disciples. Wagner resigned Nietzsche as flighty and incomprehensible, and Nietzsche resigned Wagner as half a charlatan.

There is much truth in all this. Beyond any doubt at all, Wagner was an exceedingly trying person—a perpetual problem

and exasperation to his friends. Violent, arrogant, importunate, vain, self-indulgent; an incomparable egoist, a liar, a voluptuary; insatiable in his demands for sympathy and sacrifices from his friends, yet intolerably self-righteous in any conflict of attitudes. Cornelius, who knew him well, said of him that he "never for a moment thinks seriously of anyone but himself"; that he "treated his best friends in Vienna like so many shoeblacks". Bülow exclaimed angrily that it was "a high honor to live with the great Master, but often beyond bearing". He was improvident, extreme in everything; he was ungrateful; and he must have been at times an insufferable bore. One thinks with a shudder of those occasions when he called his friends and family about him and read to them without mercy—as when, in 1851, "he read the whole of *Opera and Drama* to his Zürich circle on twelve consecutive evenings;" as when, two years later, he visited the Willes and read the text of the *Ring* to the assembled company, beginning with *Rheingold*, continuing with *Die Walküre* till after midnight, finishing *Siegfried* the next morning, and *Götterdämmerung* at night. What his first wife called "his wonderful gift of the gab" used to give King Ludwig a headache.

Yet almost everyone who knew him has testified to his strange and paradoxical charm, his irresistible magnetism. "It is impossible not to be thrilled," wrote Ernest Newman in his candid, unsparing, and brilliantly acute study of Wagner, "by the superb vitality that radiates from that little body at every stage of its career, by the dazzling light that emanates from him and gives a noontide glory to the smallest person who comes within its range. . . . The stupendous power and the inexhaustible vitality of the man are shown in nothing more clearly than in the sacrifices everyone made for him and the tyrannies they endured for him." Even Hanslick, who hated him, said that he exercised "an incomprehensible magic in order to make friends, and to retain them; friends who sacrificed themselves for him, and, thrice offended, thrice returned to him again". For all his selfishness and egoism, he could be, as Mr. Newman is careful to note, generous and honorable in his own way. "He supported Minna's parents, for instance, and would never let Minna be without money if he could provide it. He could be

kind where kindness was compatible with power; but he could never be just to a personality too independent to be drawn into his orbit, nor could he ever understand other people's desire for independence as against himself."

Remember that until his sixty-third year it was true of him, as Cosima said, that "it is written in the stars that nothing in Wagner's life is to be allowed to suffer only a partial shipwreck: everything must go to pieces precipitately and overwhelmingly." Only in the last seven years of his life did he know complete success and full contentment. Remember, too, that he was tortured for a quarter of a century by an æsthetic vision of unparalleled splendor and urgency—it might be said of him, as truly as of Bunyan, that he was "the prince of dreamers". Moreover, he was sickly, tormented by physical ailments; his nerves were usually on the raw; and he was fighting, during most of his mature existence,—against seemingly invincible stupidity, inertia, and malevolence,—to bring about an æsthetic revolution of the first magnitude. Mr. Huneker does not exaggerate when he speaks of his being "harassed by a thousand importunings—his gigantic Bayreuth scheme, his money troubles, his uncertain position despite his first big success. Ellis believes, rightly enough, that when Wagner realized Nietzsche was no longer his friend, 'he dropped him silently, as a workman drops a useless tool.' This seems cruelly selfish; but Wagner had no time for unselfish moods. . . . He was a realist. Life had made him one. . . . No, the great composer is not alone to be censured. Yet must we exclaim, Alas! poor Nietzsche!"

No doubt it is true, as Mr. Huneker conjectures, that in Nietzsche's proselytizing there was a good deal of intellectual snobbishness. When the latter-day Wagner was still undiscovered, Nietzsche, haughty and jealous, was proud to act as his disciple. "Then the mob, *hoi polloi*, began to buy excursion tickets to Bayreuth, and Nietzsche shudderingly withdrew, Wagner's music was no longer unique, no longer to be savored by the intellectually aristocratic few. So he sailed his bark for newer, rarer, stranger enterprises, and discovered—Nietzsche. After that the madhouse yawned for him, and the world lost a wonderful man."

Wonderful indeed! A superb poet, a poet of gorgeous imagination, a master of rhapsodic incantation, a magnificent lyricist. To paraphrase Mr. Mencken's eloquent tribute to him, only block-heads to-day know nothing of him; only fools are unshaken by him. But did he ever really belong in the Wagnerian camp? Did he ever really know why Wagner's music is what it is? Did he ever, in any profound sense, really hear it with his spiritual ear? We take leave to doubt it. Musically, Nietzsche was no ignoramus. Yet imagine anyone who had really perceived the essential greatness of, say, the third act of *Tristan und Isolde*, repudiating Wagner the musician. He was never born to understand the creator of *Tristan* and *Götterdämmerung*; and when he turned from Wagner, he consoled himself with—Bizet! That sums him up, musically: he renounced *Götterdämmerung* for *Carmen*. He might at least have relapsed upon Schubert, or Bach, or Palestrina. He might at least have left *Carmen*, with its marsh-mallow-sundae lyricism, its sweetly-pretty Flower Song, its cheap melodrama and its servant-girl thrills, for the delectation of the sentimental herd whom he despised.

LAWRENCE GILMAN.